

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 10401 270030Z

61

ACTION SS-25

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O R 261903Z NOV 75
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 10401

STADIS//////////

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD, MX
SUBJECT: GOM NEGATIVE RECEPTION TO GSP

REF A. MEXICO 10389; B. MEXICO 10392; C. STATE 273999
D. STATE 277516

1. SUMMARY: IT IS APPARENT THAT MEXICO'S NEGATIVE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ATTITUDE TOWARD TRA AND GSP IN PARTICULAR IS THE RESULT OF POLICY SET AT HIGHEST LEVEL. SENIOR FONOFF OFFICIAL MADE THIS EXPLICIT IN CONFIDENTIAL TALK WITH EMBOFFS NOV. 25, AND IT WAS IMPLICIT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH LOWER-LEVEL TREASURY OFFICIALS LATER SAME DAY (REF A). EMBOFFS HAD INDICATED THAT CONTINUED AND UNWARRANTED CRITICISMS OF TRA AND GSP BY GOM OFFICIALS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. FONOFF OFFICIAL SUGGESTED THAT THIS POLICY WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE IN EFFECT FOR ONE MORE YEAR. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER CONCLUDING DETAILED PRESENTATIONS OF BENEFITS OF GSP TO BENEFICIARY COUNTRIES, LA AND MEXICO IN PARTICULAR, E/C COUNSELOR OBSERVED ON "A PERSONAL BASIS" THAT THERE WERE SIGNS THAT WASHINGTON OFFICIALS, WHO HAD WORKED SO HARD TO SECURE ADOPTION OF GSP, WERE BECOMING CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 10401 270030Z

DISTURBED OVER HIGH LEVEL GOM CRITICISM OF TRA AND GSP;

CONTINUED GOM CRITICISM COULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE FOR
TRADE RELATIONS AND US-MEXICO RELATIONS GENERALLY.

3. WITH UNUSUAL CANDOR, AMBASSADOR MARIO ESPINOSA DE LOS
REYES REPLIED THAT HE AND WE KNEW THAT GSP WAS VERY BENE-
FICIAL TO MEXICO, BUT THAT IF HE SAID ANYTHING PUBLICLY
COMPLIMENTARY ABOUT THE UNITED STATES, IT WOULD COST HIM
HIS JOB AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE. HE ADDED, SOMEWHAT WANLY,
THAT THIS POLICY WOULD BE IN EFFECT FOR "AT LEAST ONE
MORE YEAR" (I.E., THROUGH REMAINDER OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S
TERM IN OFFICE). ESPINOSA WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD JUST
CONCLUDED INTERVIEW WITH EXCELSIRO AND WHILE ATTEMPTING
PARTIALLY TO SHIFT ONUS OF UNFIRENDLY COMMENTS TO NEWS-
PAERS, IMPLIED THAT HIS REMARKS WERE FAIRLY CRITICAL.

4. ESPINOSA THEN SUGGESTED THAT EMBASSY MAKE ALL OUT
EFFORT TO ADVERTISE MERITS OF GSP IN MEDIA. IN PARTICULAR,
WE SHOULD GET HIGH LEVEL US OFFICIALS TO MEXICO TO TALK
TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR WITH FULL PRESS EXPORSURE.

5. IN LATER CONVERSATIONS WITH GARRIDO (HACIENDA) (REFTELL A)
IT BECAME CLEAR THAT HE WAS ALSO OPERATING UNDER
CONSTRAINTS ABOUT RECOGNIZING BENEFITS OF GSP,
WHICH AS POINTED OUT REF A HE DESCRIBED AS LONG-
ELAYED AND PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF A COMMITMENT. WHEN
WE SUGGESTED THAT IF HE COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING COMPLI-
MENTARY ABOUT GSP A DISCREET SILENCE MIGHT HELP, GARRIDO
PROMISED THAT "NOTHING NASTY (ABOUT GSP) WILL COME OUT OF
HACIENDA". HE INDICATED HOWEVER IT WAS NOT LIKELY
SECRETARY BETETA WOULD HAVE KIND THINGS TO SAY. HE NOTED
THAT BETETA WAS OPERATING WITHIN NARROW POLITICAL PARA-
METERS. GARRIDO, LIKE ESPINOSA, SUGGESTED THAT US TRY
TO SELL ITS STORY ON GSP TO MEXICANS THROUGH PRESS
COVERAGE AND IN SMALL MEETINGS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR
LEADERS. EMBOFFS TOLD HIM THAT WE PLAN TO DO EXACTLY
THAT.

6. COMMENT:IT SEEMS CLEAR THA AT LEAST ON TRADE RE-
LATIONS, THE CONSTRAINTS ON MEXICAN FOREIGN OFFICE AND
TREASURY ALSO APPLY TO MEXICAN EMBASSY AND AMBASSADOR
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PAGE 03 MEXICO 10401 270030Z

DE OLLOQUI IN WASHINGTON. WHILE WE ARE SURE DE-
PARTMENT AND OTHER AGENCIES IN WASHINGTON SHARE OUR
SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AND EXASPERATION, THERE ARE IN-
CREASING SIGNS THAT ECHEVERRI'A POLICIES TOWARD THE US
ARE LOSING SUPPORT EVEN AMONG PREVIOUS "HARD LINE"
BUREAUCRATS, (E.G, ESPINOSA). WE RECOMMEND THEREFORE
THAT IN "REACTING" TO ECHEVERRIA'S POLICIES
WE TAKE CARE NOT CAUSE GOM OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC

AGAIN TO RALLY AROUND HIM OR TO START US OFF ON A BAD
FOOTING WITH HIS SUCCESSOR.
CALDERHEAD

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